UNIT ZERO (ROOM 0)

written by

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1 INT. DILAPIDATED APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

A narrow corridor choked by peeling wallpaper. A flickering overhead bulb casts rhythmic shadows—a mechanical heartbeat pulsing against the floor.

The silence is brittle, broken only by the rhythmic CREAK of floorboards.

ADRIEN (28) moves through the gloom. Dark circles weight his eyes like bruises. He grips a ring of antique brass keys; his knuckles are white, bloodless.

He passes the doors. The camera LINGERS on the brass plates:

UNIT 1... UNIT 2... UNIT 3...

Adrien stops. Where "4" should be, a "5" hangs crookedly.

He frowns. He backtracks, his finger tracing the air as he counts. 1, 2, 3... then 5. The sequence is broken. Logic has a leak.

He looks toward the far end of the hallway. The overhead light DIES. The corridor is swallowed by a dense, unnatural ink.

Adrien hesitates, then steps into the void. He flicks a silver Zippo. **CLINK.**

The dancing flame reveals a weathered wooden door tucked into the deepest corner. It looks like it hasn’t been breathed on in decades. A rusted metal plate reads:

UNIT 0.

Adrien looks at the key in his hand. A handwritten tag, the ink faded and shaky, reads: *"Room Zero."*

He reaches for the lock, then FREEZES. A low, heavy vibration thrums through the wood—a sound more felt than heard.

Adrien’s breath hitches. He doesn't speak. He just stares at the "0" as if it’s an eye looking back at him.

He slides the key in. **TURNS.** The mechanical **THUD** of the deadbolt echoes through the hall like a gunshot.

CUT TO:

2 INT. UNIT ZERO - CONTINUOUS

The door yields with an agonizing GROAN of rusted hinges. Adrien steps inside and shoves it shut.

The **CLICK** of the lock is surgical—a final severance from the world outside.

The space is a vacuum. Grimy, bone-colored walls. No windows. No furniture. Only the essentials of a nightmare remain:

A skeletal wooden chair centered in the room.

A full-length mirror, a jagged crack splitting the glass like a lightning bolt.

A naked tungsten bulb hanging by a frayed wire, flickering in a rhythmic, dying pulse.

Adrien drops his satchel. The impact is a dead **THUD**—the walls are hungry, swallowing the sound before it can echo.

He approaches the mirror. The crack bisects his reflection; his face is a broken puzzle, one eye staring from a different reality. He searches his own gaze, looking for the logic of "Zero."

He moves to the chair. He sits, handling the wood cautiously, as if it might shatter under the weight of his guilt.

CLOSE UP - ADRIEN

He grips the armrests. His pupils dilate, drinking in the darkness.

Suddenly, the ambient hum of the bulb and the rasp of his breath **VANISH.** Absolute, crushing silence.

Adrien leans his head back. He feels the severance; the wind from the hallway, the world outside... it’s all gone. The room has detached from the map of the living.

ADRIEN
(a ghostly whisper)
After zero... there is nothing.

His eyes track to the wall. The bulb is still flickering, pulsing yellow light, but Adrien’s shadow is **STAGNANT.** It doesn't jitter. It doesn't mimic his tremors.

The shadow sits on the bone-colored wall—frozen, independent, and looming.

POV - ADRIEN

The shadow remains a solid, unmoving silhouette, even as the light source above it wavers violently. The shadow's edges are razor-sharp against the flickering grain of the wall

CUT TO: BLACK.

3 INT. UNIT ZERO - NIGHT

Adrien bolts upright. Panic, sharp and cold, strikes his chest. He steals one last look at the **STAGNANT SHADOW** on the wall—it remains frozen, watching him.

He turns and wrenches the door open, desperate for the mundane world.

4 INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Adrien lunges out of Room Zero, slamming the heavy wood shut. He leans his back against it, chest heaving. The sound of his gasping breath echoes too loudly in the narrow space.

The hallway is unchanged: the same sickly yellow light, the same peeling wallpaper. A static purgatory.

Panic fueling his stride, he sprints. His boots THUNDER against the floorboards. He reaches for his own apartment door, his hands fumbling with the brass keys.

CLOSE UP - THE KEYS

The keys jingle violently. He finds the one for his unit. He shoves it into the lock—

ADRIEN'S POV

He looks up at the door number. The brass plate doesn't say "Unit 4" or "Unit 5".

It is a blank, rusted plate. **UNIT 0.**

5 INT. ADRIEN'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

He bursts inside, throwing the locks. He presses his back against the wood until his heart rate slows.

He scans the room. Everything seems normal: his laptop sits on the sofa, a half-finished cup of coffee on the coaster—still lukewarm.

He moves toward his desk for a glass of water, but his movement **STOPS.**

CLOSE UP - THE DESK

Beside the lamp sits a thick, crimson hardcover book. Adrien’s hand trembles as he reaches for it.

Adrien grips a hardcover book. The title: **"NIHILISM AND THE VOID."** Below it: **"BY ADRIEN EMERSON."**

He stares at his own name, his expression unreadable. He flips through the pages. They are crammed with dense, handwritten notes.

CLOSE ON: The top of a page. The date reads MAY 14, 2027.

Adrien presses his thumb against a line of text. The ink **SMEARS** across the paper. Fresh.

He looks up at the opposite wall.

The framed print of the "Tower of Babel" is **GONE**. In its place hangs a large photograph:

Adrien, seen from behind, stands at the end of a sterile, infinite corridor. He is facing a heavy steel door labeled: **UNIT ZERO.**

Adrien stumbles back, his heel catching the edge of the desk.

ADRIEN
(a jagged, broken whisper)
When did I... when did I take this?

He rushes to the full-length mirror. He sees his reflection.

But in the mirror’s world, the door behind him is **WIDE OPEN**, even though the physical door is shut tight.

He spins around. The physical door remains locked.

He looks back at the mirror. In the reflection, the door remains a dark, gaping maw. A throat waiting to swallow him.

EXTREME CLOSE UP (XCU)

Adrien’s eyes—dilated, swimming in a sea of raw terror. Inside his pupil, we see the flickering yellow light of Room Zero.

CUT TO BLACK.

NT. ADRIEN’S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Adrien steps inside. The room has transformed. The grime has vanished, replaced by a warm, minimalist sanctuary. Deep velvet curtains frame the windows.

The soft, crackling notes of a **JAZZ RECORD** drift from a vintage turntable.

SARA (30)—radiating a quiet elegance—sits on the sofa. She looks up. Her smile is seasoned, carrying years of shared history.

SARA
You’re back? I thought the university audit would keep you until midnight. I poured you a coffee, Adrien.

Adrien stands frozen. He knows her. Sara. The "what-if" from his first year of college. The spark that never caught fire.

ADRIEN
(voice thick, trembling)
What... what are you doing here?

Sara laughs—a soft, genuine sound. She stands, moving toward him with the grace of someone who belongs. She places a hand on his shoulder. Her skin is warm. Irrefutably real.

SARA
Are you okay? We’ve lived here for five years. Did you forget it’s our anniversary?

Adrien looks down. A simple gold band circles his ring finger. On the wall, framed diplomas declare him a **Tenured Professor**. The life he dreamed of, but never had the courage to build.

He stumbles back, retreating from her touch.

ADRIEN
(a jagged whisper)
This isn’t me... or maybe... it’s the "me" I was too afraid to be.

He bolts, spinning around for the exit. Sara calls his name, but her voice **WARPS**—stretching into a haunting, metallic echo, like a ghost trapped in a long tunnel.

6 EXT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Adrien bursts back into the corridor. The warmth is stripped away instantly, replaced by the sickly, sulfurous glow of the flickering bulb.

He spins in circles, frantic. His eyes search the peeling walls for the only anchor left in his collapsing reality: **UNIT ZERO.**

CLOSE UP - ADRIEN

His face is a mask of manic grief.

CUT TO BLACK.

7 INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT (TIMELESS)

Adrien, face fractured by exhaustion, paces. With every jagged movement, his clothes **FLICKER**—shifting fabrics and styles like a glitch in a digital stream.

MONTAGE - THE GHOSTS OF POTENTIALITY

THE ELITE: Adrien emerges from Unit Zero in a razor-sharp suit. He enters a glass penthouse. He stands atop a mountain of currency, but his eyes are hollow voids. His hands shake uncontrollably.

THE INFIRM: Adrien pulls the door open. He is skeletal, gaunt. A hacking cough rattles his chest. A rusted oxygen tank sits beside the chair in Room Zero. Silence is his only companion.

THE PRODIGAL: He enters a room smelling of home-cooked food. His parents—lost years ago—smile at him from a dinner table. Adrien reaches out, but he is a ghost at his own feast. His hand passes through the air like mist.

BACK TO HALLWAY

Adrien collapses against the door of Unit Zero. He is no longer sure which version of "him" is real.

8 INT. UNIT ZERO - NIGHT

Adrien is collapsed on the floor. The flickering bulb now swings like a slow, rhythmic **PENDULUM**, counting down the seconds of his dissolving existence. He grips the keys so tight the brass bites into his palm. A single drop of blood hits the floor—but it makes no sound.

He looks at the cracked mirror. **TEN REFLECTIONS** stare back. A gallery of his failed selves.

ADRIEN
(a shattered scream)
Which one of you is me?! Which one is real?!

He lunges at the mirror, clawing at the glass. It is cold, impenetrable.

ADRIEN (CONT'D)
(a desperate whisper)
Which choice am I? The one who stayed? The one who ran? Or the one who never wanted to exist at all?

The silence of Room Zero hardens. Adrien realizes he can no longer hear his own breath. He looks down at his hands—they are becoming **TRANSLUCENT**. His very fiber is unraveling, dissolving into a sea of "potential realities."

ADRIEN (CONT'D)
I... I don’t exist. I am only the sum of everything I didn't do.

A manic energy takes him. He begins to claw at the door's metal plate. Under his frantic scratching, the number **"0"** begins to **BLEED**—a deep, visceral red that stains his fingertips.

GOD’S EYE VIEW (HIGH ANGLE)

Adrien lies curled in a fetal position in the center of the void. Around him, dozens of different shadows spin in a slow, suffocating whirlpool. The room is no longer a room; it is a drain, and he is the water.

CUT TO BLACK.

9 INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT (TIMELESS)

ADRIEN crawls out of UNIT ZERO. He no longer runs. His body is withered, crushed under the gravitational pull of a thousand parallel lives.

The hallway is no longer a physical structure. The walls PULSE like living flesh. The peeling wallpaper BLEEDS—a slow, rhythmic weeping of dark fluid. The environment is becoming a biological extension of his own trauma.

He reaches his apartment. The door is ajar, BREATHING light into the hall.

10 INT. ADRIEN'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Adrien stumbles inside. The room has been stripped of its sanctuary.

SARA sits at the desk. She turns. She has no eyes, no nose, no mouth. Her face is a smooth, terrifying expanse of flesh. A faint, sickening VIBRATION ripples beneath her skin.

SARA
(a distorted, sub-bass hum)
You're late, Adrien...

Adrien recoils. On the wall, the hands of the clock spin backward with violent velocity.

The TICK-TOCK transforms into the sound of a SLEDGEHAMMER slamming against a skull.

Adrien stares into a darkened corner. A FIGURE huddles there.

He approaches, paralyzed. The figure is HIMSELF—a filth-ridden, hollow-eyed version of Adrien. He squats, ravenously CHEWING the pages of a book: "Nihilism." Ink stains his lips like black blood.

The SHADOW-ADRIEN looks up. A hideous, jagged grin splits his face.

SHADOW-ADRIEN
(a gravelly rasp)
Which of "us" are you looking for? There is only zero here... the absolute void.

Adrien SCREAMS—a sound lost in the hammer-beat of the clock.

He BOLTS for the exit.

11 INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

He runs. But the stairwell is gone. He finds himself standing before **UNIT 0.** He spins, sprinting the opposite way—his boots pounding the floor—but the corridor loops like a glitching tape. He is back. Standing before **UNIT 0.** Again.

The space has folded. A Möbius Strip of decaying wallpaper and sulfurous light.

He flings the door open, desperate to break the loop, but he only steps back into the *same* hallway. **DOOR... HALLWAY... DOOR... HALLWAY.** A recursive nightmare.

He collapses. The floor beneath him softens, turning into a black, viscous tar that drinks his shadow.

Dozens of ARMS erupt from the pulsing walls—limbs in suit jackets, hospital gowns, tattered rags. The "What-ifs" are no longer reflections; they are predators. They claw at him, dragging him toward the open maw of Room Zero.

ADRIEN
(a broken plea)
Stop... just let it end! I don't want any of them!

A cold, hollow laugh echoes from the void. The door of Unit Zero begins to **EXPAND**, growing until it swallows the horizon of his reality.

CLOSE UP

Adrien's hand claws at the floorboards. His nails snap, leaving bloody streaks on the wood as a titanic, invisible force drags him into the absolute ink of the room.

He is being pulled back into the "Zero" from which he can never emerge.

CUT TO BLACK.

12 INT. ADRIEN'S APARTMENT (DILAPIDATED) - NIGHT

Adrien enters. The room is no longer a sanctuary or a nightmare; it is a tomb. Gray dust coats every surface like a shroud. The air is stagnant, smelling of rot and forgotten things.

He moves to the desk—the **ANCHOR** of every reality. Beneath a pile of decayed documents, he finds a dark plastic cover: **His Identity Card.**

He flips it open. Pages for Marriage, Children, Addresses... all blank. A life unwritten.

INSERT - IDENTITY CARD

A crimson stamp bleeds across the final page: **VOID.** Beside the *Date of Death*: **NOVEMBER 15, 2015.**

BACK TO SCENE

Adrien stares. Ten years ago. Ten years before he ever "arrived" here.

ADRIEN
(a voice like dry leaves)
I... I never made it to that exam. The lights... the sound of the brakes... and then...

The memory floods back—not as a flashback, but as a **sensation:** The blinding glare of headlights. The screech of tires. The metallic CRUNCH of bone meeting steel.

He looks at his hands. They aren't translucent anymore. They are gray and cold—stones left out in a long rain.

He understands. Unit Zero wasn't a gateway to a multiverse. It was a **Purgatory of Regrets.** A crack in time where his mind expanded a single second into a decade, just to inhabit every "What-if" before the light went out.

He looks into the mirror.

The Professor, the Elite, the Shadow—all gone. The mirror shows only the truth:

An empty wooden chair in a pitch-black room.

13 INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Adrien crawls out. The hallway is silent. No clawing hands. No faceless horrors. Just a heavy, eternal stillness. He drags himself back toward **UNIT 0.**

THE LANDLORD stands at the end of the corridor. Dressed in funeral black, watching with cold, patient eyes.

LANDLORD
Have you finished? Have you seen them all?

Adrien stares at the "0" plate. He understands now. Zero: The point where nothing is added, and nothing is taken away.

ADRIEN
I wasn't any of them.

LANDLORD
You were only the one who opened the door. The others... they were just shadows flickering across your eyes in that final second.

Adrien places his hand on the knob. He is no longer afraid. He has faced a truth colder than any nightmare: He is merely a "probability" that ended long ago.

He opens the door. Inside—only an absolute, vast, and comforting darkness.

Adrien steps inside. The sound of the door closing echoes like a period at the end of a very long sentence.

LONG SHOT

The hallway stands empty. The rusted "0" plate slowly peels away from the wood and **CLATTERS** to the floor. The doors now run in a perfect, unbroken line: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Zero no longer exists.

FADE TO BLACK.

14 INT. UNIT ZERO - NIGHT

Adrien stands in the dark, clutching the voided Identity Card. The wooden chair waits in the center like a silent altar. Adrien sits with a calm, deliberate motion.

He looks up at the tungsten bulb. The flickering slows, syncing with the fading thrum of his pulse.

ADRIEN
(a terrifyingly peaceful whisper)
I was... always here.

His hand slips. The Identity Card falls.

A LOUD MECHANICAL CLICK. The light dies. Total darkness.

THE END.